



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/753,496	01/02/2001	Jeffrey H. Sherman	AVISTA/209-1016	2163
7590	02/25/2004		EXAMINER	
THOMASON, MOSER & PATTERSON N. ALEXANDER NOLTE 3040 POST OAK BLVD SUITE 1500 HOUSTON, TX 77056			NGUYEN, TAM M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1764	

DATE MAILED: 02/25/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

Applicant's arguments filed on August 25, 2003 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of the WO 97/00928 reference. A discussion of the rejection follows:

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 4, 6, 11, 12, 18, 23, 24, 30, 38, 40, and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 97/00928.

The WO 97/00928 reference discloses a process for refining used oil by contacting the oil with an alkaline base (e.g., sodium hydroxide) in the presence of ethylene glycol. The used oil mixture is then washed with water (solvent). Next, the used oil is separated from the water/contaminants to produce clean used oil which is further purified in a distillation zone. (See abstract; since the WO 97/00928 is equivalent to US Patent 6,072,065; see col. 3, lines 7-60; col. 4, lines 11-59; col. 5, lines 1-15)

Art Unit: 1764

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 7-9, 13, 15, 16, 19-20, 22-28, 31, 33-35, 37, 43, 45-47, 49, and 54-56, rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 97/00928

The WO 97/00928 reference discloses a process for refining used oil by contacting the oil with an alkaline base (e.g., sodium hydroxide) in the presence of ethylene glycol. The used oil

Art Unit: 1764

mixture is then washed with water (solvent). Next, the used oil is separated from the water/contaminants to produce a clean used oil which is further purified in a distillation zone. (See abstract; since the WO 97/00928 is equivalent to US Patent 6,072,065, see col. 3, lines 7-60; col. 4, lines 11-59; col. 5, lines 1-15 of the US Patent)

The reference does not disclose the distillation column conditions. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the process of WO 97/00928 by using the claimed conditions because the reference discloses that the conditions are selected to obtain desired fractions. Therefore, one of skill in the art would select any conditions including the claimed conditions which would produce desired product.

The reference does not disclose the amount of base or glycol. However, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the process of WO 97/00928 by using any amounts of base and glycol including the claimed amounts because WO 97/00928 does not limit the amount. Therefore, one of skill in the art would employ any amount of base and glycol that is effective to remove contaminants from the oil and it would be expected that the results would be similar when using the claimed amounts in the process of WO 97/00928.

*Allowable Subject Matter*

Claims 50, 51, and 53 are allowed.

Claims 21, 36, 40, and 48 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The primary reason for allowance is that no prior art of record discloses or suggests a method for removing contaminants from used oil wherein the oil is contacted with a glycol in the presence of an inorganic base compound and the oil mixture is then mixed with N, N-dimethylformamide to dissolve contaminants from the used oil.

*Conclusion*

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tam M. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1452. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on (571) 272-1444. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

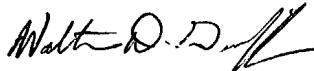
Application/Control Number: 09/753,496  
Art Unit: 1764

Page 6

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Tam M. Nguyen  
Examiner  
Art Unit 1764

TN

  
Walter D. Griffin  
Primary Examiner